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## Scope of Hostage Mission Unfolds

# Debate Rekindles on Failure

President Carter's intelligence chief says a new inquiry should be made into the failed Iranian hostage rescue mission attempted two years ago today.

Retired Navy Adm. Stansfield Turner, director of the Central Intelligence Agency during the Carter presidency, called the raid a "searing national experience" that has not been completely plumbed for the lessons it holds for the nation.

Gen. David C. Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the principal architect of the rescue mission, which ended in flaming disaster

on the Iranian desert, said yesterday that such an investigation would serve no useful purpose because there is little about the raid that has not already been explored.

*This article was reported and written by staff writers Scott Armstrong, George C. Wilson and Bob Woodward.*

This difference of opinion over whether a new review is in order comes at a time when other senior officials involved with the April 25, 1980, midnight attempt to extract 53 hostages from Tehran are confirming that the operation was much bigger and bolder than the public has been told to date.

A series of interviews conducted by The Washington Post disclosed a sharp difference in perspective among top military leaders, some lower level planners and other Carter administration officials who knew what American troopers and warplanes were prepared to do. Contingency plans included rushing in a backup force of 90 more commandos if the initial assault force of 100 men

under Col. Charles A. (Chargin' Charlie) Beckwith got trapped in Tehran or the nearby airport destined to be the takeoff point for their long-distance escape from Iran.

Military leaders insisted they were counting heavily on speed, surprise and stealth and believed it might even be possible to pull off the rescue without firing a shot at anybody. Carter and his top aides were willing to accept limited casualties and some officials believed there would inevitably be deaths, perhaps hundreds if the firepower available to Beckwith was called in.

Noting such conflicting viewpoints and arguing that the raid has too many policy implications to ignore any longer, Turner said:

"It is now time to appoint a small group to examine how the operation was planned and executed. The purpose would not be to look backward and cast blame but to look forward and learn the lessons that surely lie buried in" the complicated mission.

"Some of the questions that should be addressed would be: What does the experience tell us about national decision making? About our military capabilities, organization and motivation? About the problems of totally secret military operations."

Contended Jones in a separate interview:

"We're not going to have another situation just like the Iranian situation. They never repeat themselves. Let's look at the fundamental problems like organization rather than taking an isolated case. We don't need to go back and look at things that happened two years ago. Let's get on with solving those fundamental problems," with reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a priority high on Jones' list.

much better off today to pull off a rescue successfully. He noted that a panel of officers under retired Adm. James L. Holloway III has already delved into the Iranian rescue mission and issued a critical report.

Turner and some other former senior administration officials and military planners are known to think that the Holloway investigation was too limited and amounted to the military investigating itself.

That Carter's chief intelligence executive, who was in on the top secret planning for the raid, is willing to urge a new inquiry strongly suggests there is still, on the second anniversary of the raid, a lot more that could be told.

Interviews with Carter administration officials, military leaders and people who went on the raid but pressed that viewpoint in bringing these fresh disclosures, some of them contradictory, about the most daring rescue ever attempted by the American military:

- Getting into the embassy undetected depended in part on information secured by the CIA from a handful of infiltrated agents and bribed guards among the student militants, including some who were scheduled to be on duty as guards the night of the raid.

Some Carter administration officials said the plan called for all the guards to be killed, while military leaders insisted the "Delta" force under Beckwith was equipped with special hand and leg cuffs that could be snapped on the guards in an instant—and would have been if the troopers had sneaked into the embassy as anticipated. Military leaders doubted the CIA or anyone else had managed to co-opt the guards, but acknowledged they were not responsible for that part of the mission.